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 INFO RUEHRH/USELO RIYADH 8449
 RUQMKW/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 6750
 RUEHMA/AMEMBASSY MANAMA 3686
 RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 2556
 RUQMMT/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT 2638
 RUQMBI/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 3804
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EXDIS

H PASS TO SFRC FOR BINNENDIJK AND ASHWORTH

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: OREP, PREL, MARR, GCC, ZP, SA, US
 SUBJECT: STAFFDEL BINNENDIJK: JUNE 30 MEETING WITH
 DEFMIN SULTAN

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. SUMMARY: SAUDI ARABIAN DEFMIN SULTAN EXCEPTIONALLY INTERRUPTED HIS ID AL-FITR HOLIDAY TO SEE SENIOR SFRC STAFFERS HANS BINNENDIJK AND WILLIAM ASHWORTH AT HIS EASTERN PROVINCE SEASIDE VILLA NEAR DHAHRAN. IN AN HOUR AND A HALF DISCUSSION, SULTAN REITERATED SAUDI POSITIONS ON CURRENT GULF DEFENSE ISSUES WITH SEVERAL POINTS OF EMPHASIS: GIVEN IRANIAN CAPABILITIES, SAUDI ARABIA COULD DEFEND ITS EASTERN PROVINCE, BUT NEEDED CONTINUED SUPPORT IN NEW WEAPONRY (HE REFERRED TO THE CHAPARRAL 72-C REFUSAL, STINGER DELAY AND CURRENT SAUDI DESIRE FOR MORE F-15S); PROTECTION OF INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING IN THE GULF WAS BEYOND THE CAPABILITY OF GCC STATES AND WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UN, NOTABLY THE BIG POWERS; U.S. ESCORT OF GULF SHIPPING WAS INADVISABLE, SINCE THE RUSSIANS WOULD HAVE TO REACT; SAUDI ARABIA WOULD STRIKE BACK IF ITS OWN FACILITIES WERE HIT BY IRAN; SABOTAGE WOULD BE DETERRED BY SWIFT AND PITILESS JUSTICE TO THE PERPETRATORS.

3. SULTAN BROKE THE LOCAL HOLIDAY-INSPIRED INERTIA REGARDING THE STAFFDEL'S PROGRAM BY PERSONALLY AUTHORIZING VISITS TO SOME KEY EASTERN PROVINCE INSTALLATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING DAY. END SUMMARY.

4. SULTAN, WHO HAD TRAVELLED TO THE EASTERN PROVINCE IN PART TO MAKE ID VISITS TO SAUDI EASTERN PROVINCE DEFENSE INSTALLATIONS, WARMLY WELCOMED THE STAFFDEL

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(RECALLING BINNENDIJK FROM AN EARLIER VISIT) AND WAS RELAXED AND FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT THE DISCUSSION. HE ASKED THE STAFFDEL TO CONVEY HIS REGARDS TO THE SFRC LEADERSHIP AND ALSO PARTICULARLY NOTED HIS APPRECIATION OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S CONCERN AND HELP DURING CURRENT TENSIONS. DRAWN OUT BY BINNENDIJK AND ASHWORTH THROUGH QUESTIONS ON THE SAUDI AND GCC POSTURE TOWARD DEFENDING THE SOUTHERN SHORE OF THE GULF AND GULF SHIPPING, SULTAN RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS.

5. ASKED BY BINNENDIJK TO EVALUATE SAUDI ARABIA'S ABILITY TO DEFEND ITS EASTERN PROVINCE, SULTAN SAID NO MILITARY DEFENSE COULD ASSURE 100 PERCENT PROTECTION, BUT SAUDI ARABIA COULD DEFEND THE EASTERN PROVINCE GIVEN IRAN'S CURRENT (DEPLETED) MILITARY INVENTORY AND ITS PREOCCUPATION WITH THE LAND WAR. THIS DID NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT THE KINGDOM DID NOT NEED ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, AND U.S. SUPPORT WAS IMPORTANT IN THIS REGARD. SAUDI ARABIA NEEDED "TWICE" ITS CURRENT NUMBER OF F-15S IN ORDER TO DEFEND THE KINGDOM. HE HAD ASKED THAT 25 BE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. SAUDI ARABIA HAD ALSO REQUESTED THE IMPROVED CHAPARRAL AND 1,400 STINGERS. THE STINGERS HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN, AND THEN A PORTION PROVIDED BY THE PRESIDENT UNDER HIS EMERGENCY AUTHORITY. SAUDI ARABIA WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO SEE ITS ORIGINAL REQUEST GRANTED MORE SPEEDILY, SINCE THIS MIGHT HAVE SPARED THE USG AN EXCEPTIONAL -- AND POSSIBLY CONTROVERSIAL -- PROCEDURE AND WOULD HAVE ALSO PROVIDED ADDITIONAL TIME FOR TRAINING OF SAUDI STINGER CADRES. THE IMPROVED CHAPARRAL HAD BEEN DENIED (HE MEANT THE CHAPARRAL MIM 72-C), AND SAUDI ARABIA HAD TO MAKE A SPECIAL DEAL FOR THE SHAHINE "WHICH IS LESS EFFECTIVE." IF THE U.S. COULD NOT PROVIDE NEEDED WEAPONRY SAUDI ARABIA WOULD HAVE TO LOOK ELSEWHERE. THIS WOULD INFRINGE ON THE SPECIAL AND BENEFICIAL U.S.-SAUDI MILITARY RELATIONSHIP AND ALSO, SULTAN OBSERVED, PROVIDE MONEY TO INDUSTRY OTHER THAN THAT OF THE U.S. SULTAN POSTSCRIPTED THAT ANOTHER NEEDED ITEM WAS THE AIM 7-M AIR-TO-AIR MISSILE (WHICH HE HAS MENTIONED SEVERAL TIMES OF LATE).

6. IN RESPONSE TO ASHWORTH'S QUESTION ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE GCC TO -- COLLECTIVELY -- DEFEND ITSELF IN MONTHS AHEAD, SULTAN SAID SAUDI ARABIA COULD DEFEND ITSELF, BAHRAIN AND QATAR. KUWAIT WAS MOVING AHEAD TO DO EVERYTHING IT COULD, AND THE KINGDOM WAS COOPERATING.

PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE CASE OF KUWAIT WAS A BETTER "EARLY WARNING CAPABILITY," AND TO DEVELOP SUCH A CAPABILITY SAUDI ARABIA, THE U.S. AND KUWAIT WOULD HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER. THE EMIRATES AND OMAN WERE THE "MAIN PROBLEM." IT WAS THEREFORE IMPORTANT THESE COUNTRIES BE ABLE TO BUY WEAPONRY APPROPRIATE TO THEIR NEEDS, WHETHER FROM THE U.S., ENGLAND OR FRANCE. FINALLY, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE KINGDOM AND OTHER GCC STATES RECEIVE "INFORMATION ON WHAT WAS GOING ON IN IRAN," AND THE KINGDOM WAS APPRECIATIVE OF U.S. EFFORTS HERE.

7. BINNENDIJK THEN ASKED WHETHER THE GCC STATES WERE PREPARED TO EXTEND THEIR DEFENSES TO TANKER TRAFFIC IN THE GULF. SULTAN PROMPTLY REPLIED THAT THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE AND INADVISABLE. THE GULF STATES DID NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF PROTECTING INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC. MOREOVER, IF THEY TRIED TO DO SO THEY WOULD BE "INSERTING THEMSELVES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS" WHICH WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE UN. THE U.S. AND USSR AND OTHER UN MEMBERS SHOULD ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THIS PROBLEM AND NOT LEAVE IT TO SMALLER COUNTRIES. IF THE GCC STATES ATTEMPTED TO FILL SUCH A ROLE, THIS "WOULD BE LIKE A MAN BUYING A SUIT WHICH

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WAS TOO LARGE."

8. SULTAN ADDED THAT IT WOULD IMPROVE THE SITUATION GREATLY IF IRAN CONFINED ITS ATTACKS TO THE "TERRITORY OF IRAQ" (FROM CONTEXT HE MEANT THIS TO INCLUDE IRAQI TERRITORIAL WATERS) AND IF IRAQ DID THE OBVERSE WHICH -- SULTAN SAID -- IRAQ WAS "VIRTUALLY DOING NOW." IN CLOSING HIS REMARKS ON THE GCC, SULTAN URGED THAT THE STAFFDEL VISIT THE OTHER GULF STATES AND WAS PLEASED WHEN TOLD THEY WOULD VISIT BAHRAIN, KUWAIT AND OMAN ON THIS TRIP.

9. WHEN ASKED BY BINNENDIJK IF HE FORESAW A POSSIBLE U.S. ESCORT ROLE FOR GULF TANKERS, SULTAN FIRST ONLY MADE THE GENERAL OBSERVATION THAT IF THE U.S. AND OTHERS MADE CLEAR TO IRAN THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO UN RESOLUTIONS ON FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THE GULF, IRAN WOULD BE MORE INCLINED TO COMPLY. WHEN BINNENDIJK PRESSED, SULTAN SAID THAT IF THE U.S. (ALONE) PROVIDED MILITARY ESCORT TO TANKERS RUSSIA WOULD REACT, AND THE PROBLEM WOULD EXPAND.

10. WHEN ASKED WHAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD DO IF IRAN ATTACKED SAUDI FACILITIES, SULTAN PROMPTLY REPLIED THAT THE KINGDOM WOULD STRIKE BACK. THIS WOULD BE A DEFENSIVE MEASURE. SAUDI ARABIA WOULD FEEL FREE TO SELECT APPROPRIATE TARGETS IN IRAN -- WHETHER IRANIAN BASES OR OTHERWISE -- FOR SUCH A COUNTER STRIKE.

11. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE KINGDOM'S VIEWS ON THE PROBLEM OF POSSIBLE SABOTAGE OF SAUDI FACILITIES, SULTAN DELIVERED A VIGOROUS MONOLOGUE ABOUT THE BEST PREVENTION BEING SWIFT AND MERCILESS JUSTICE AS PROVIDED FOR BY THE KORAN. HE WAS NOT MOVED TO ANY REFINEMENT OF HIS THEORY OR ADDITIONS TO HIS PRESCRIPTION WHEN THE CHARGE OBSERVED THAT SABOTEURS SENT BY IRAN MIGHT WELL BE SUICIDE SQUADS.

12. COMMENT: U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS WERE ADVANCED BY THIS AMICABLE EXCHANGE AND THE STAFFDEL'S OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE, FIRST HAND, THE VIEWS OF THE SAUDI DEFMIN. SULTAN REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPREAD OF THE WAR TO THE GULF BUT MANIFESTLY CONTINUES TO HOLD TO THE VIEW THAT U.S. INTERVENTION -- AS OPPOSED TO WEAPONS SUPPORT -- IS SOMETHING TO ENVISAGE ONLY AS A LAST RESORT.

13. STAFFDEL BINNENDIJK HAS NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THIS REPORT.

14. KUWAIT MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. SUDDARTH

END OF MESSAGE

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